

The Nation

and

THE ATHENÆUM

Reviews.

ATHENS AND LONDON.

Essays and Addresses. By GILBERT MURRAY. (Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d. net.)

MODERN liberalism is in sore need of new prophets; and it is not unlikely that it will gain them from directions that are unexpected. Certainly few people have enriched its consciousness in quite the same way as Professor Murray. He is one of the outstanding instances in our own time of a man who has brought a special cultivation in a study a little remote from the ordinary pursuits of the age to making clear the truths that age is most likely to neglect. Professor Murray is exactly what one understands by a great humanist; the past he has so richly explored is linked to the service of the coming generations. And that, it may be remarked, is in the great tradition of humanism. No one is likely to belittle the immense services to scholarship of men like Porson and Bentley. But we owe a qualitatively different kind of respect to those who, like Scaliger and Casaubon, were not only great scholars, but soldiers in the war of human freedom precisely because they were scholars. For Cobet there was no real world outside the texts and his emendations to them; his scholarship was an instrument which, however exquisite, was not instinct with a love of his fellow men. But, whatever is to be urged against Professor Murray, whether he has been tracing the historic fortunes of the Greek epic, or translating the mind of a Greek who heard the thunderings of Cleon into some of the best prose of our generation, he has always been a fighter in the struggle for liberal-mindedness. It is a proud and noble record.

This volume of essays is, in a way, a summary of his work; for it reveals, and always with distinction, the varied paths through which he had made his way to his goal. What in them is above all important is not so much the particular discussion, even when, as in the brilliant paper on Aristophanes and the War Party in Athens, we have a superb piece of historical reconstruction; what, above all, is important is the general attitude of mind these essays reveal. Professor Murray is a liberal to whom the vital aspect of his faith is its regard for the inherent dignity of the human soul. This attitude implies, above all, an insistence that the primary care in the organization of our institutions must be respect for conscience. It is, as a consequence, against every act which attempts the degradation of conscience that he is adamant. What he values is the attitude of men like Mahatma Gandhi and Stephen Hobhouse, who follow the right as they see it, and deny, as the essence of their creed, that justice and violence can ever go hand in hand. It is, in fact, the torch of reason that Professor Murray holds above us. Of force, blind impulse, passion, he will have nothing; they are not of the spirit, and, like all gross things, they are wasteful and transient. They do not secure that inward freedom which is alone ultimately important and comes from the unfettered opportunity of the personal soul to discover its dignity through research into knowledge. "The chains of the mind," says Professor Murray, "are not broken by any form of ignorance. The chains of the mind are broken by understanding." But understanding involves a way of peace and co-operation. It means a doctrine of love instead of a gospel of hate. It means inquiry into ugly and repulsive things, not a shrinking from them. Fear is

the foe of reason; and the foes of reason are the enemies of freedom.

The liberalism of which this creed is a vital expression has splendid traditions as part of its heritage. It was this liberalism which stood by Mazzini in his struggle for Italian liberty; which denounced the intolerable policy of Disraeli in the Near East; which opposed, in the face of national outcry, the shame of the South African war. It has always meant the destruction of oppressive barriers. Freedom for women, religious toleration, educational opportunity, political equality—for all of these it has battled as the substance of its ideals. And one can see throughout Professor Murray's pages how intimate a loyalty he has had to the men who fought these battles, how eagerly his faith has made their victories his own. For him each struggle has found its justification because, ultimately, it has meant an increase in the number of free minds who add to the State decision the instructed judgment of their conscience. He has never doubted the ultimate nobility of human nature, could it but be untrammelled by the errors of the past. And, rightly, he has always held that to free ourselves from the errors of that past we must first seek to grasp its meaning. History, in fact, is to the true scholar above all a philosophy teaching by example. The student of the Peloponnesian war can see in the narrative of Thucydides the ruin of a civilization in not dissimilar fashion and from not dissimilar causes from those which seem likely to cause our own downfall. The veriest "Die-Hard" can see the cruel wrong that Athens did to Melos. But only a liberal rationalism will teach him to see the Melos at our own gates.

A mind that can teach these things with generous and passionate sincerity may be truly called a national asset. The liberalism Professor Murray symbolizes has understood where nationalism is justified, where the treatment of inferior races becomes a sacred trust, where obvious political discrimination is vicious and obsolete. It has, as yet, ceased at that point to be creative. It has been rightly individualistic wherever social organization has sought to place limits to the working of the mind. But there is a sense in which it has been prisoner to its own logic. For it has failed to realize that the type of mind it is zealous to protect is the essential result of training, and that training implies a leisure and material comfort to which most men have as yet no access. Athens died because her civilization was founded upon slavery; but our civilization has, at bottom, a fragility due to causes only quantitatively different. The Athenians followed Cleon, as our generation follows the makers of the Peace of Versailles, because they had not been trained to see that the only ultimate triumphs are those of the mind. They grasped at the shadow of material success by surrendering the substance of spiritual rightness. To do differently they must see, as Plato saw, that "the one great thing" is education. But it is now commonplace to insist that you cannot make education creative for the mass of citizens in a society of which the dominating motive is personal acquisitiveness. For that involves the sacrifice of the many to the few, and where leisure, cultivation, insight, are the corollary of that disproportion, the mass inevitably is harnessed to the pursuit of the means of life and cannot know the effort to live well. The city where rich and poor, man and woman, Athenian and Spartan, are all equal and all free, and where men . . . have wings: that is the dream of Professor Murray, as it was the dream of his Athenian forerunner. But the conditions of its realization are rooted in an economic psychology to which,

as yet, liberal thought has turned a deaf ear. It will not become the treasured possession of humble men until they are trained to the perception of its splendor. And they will not be trained until liberalism has freed their bodies from prison, as in the last three hundred years it has freed, at least in part, their souls.

H. J. L.

ASSORTED POETRY.

Poems: 1916-1920. By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. (Cobden-Sanderson. 6s. net.)

Music: Lyrical and Narrative Poems. By JOHN FREEMAN. (Selwyn & Blount. 7s. 6d. net.)

The Island of Youth, and Other Poems. By EDWARD SHANKS. (Collins. 5s. net.)

MR. MURRY's volume being the smallest of the three, and also virtually his first public appearance in this character, the two winners of the Hawthornden Prize may appropriately yield to him priority of consideration. From a writer of his incisive power, even though the special gift of poetry were lacking in him, it would be natural to expect a vivid and determined manner in verse; but that is what we do not find. The majority of his twenty-three poems are static and indeterminate. He does not sufficiently warm us with observation of humanity's and nature's outward mark by way of preparing us for his rarefied explorations in the spirit; he climbs, and knocks away the ladder. Clogging mortality, the "weary lie of things terrene," are his enemies, and he attempts, therefore, a poetry of thoughts. To impart emotion, even when analyzed, is a matter of illustration, of referring what is not familiar or observed experience to familiar and moving associations. Mr. Murry is, perhaps of intent, defective in this; his metaphor seldom sharper than, for an instance, "the dim branches of the fruited tree That grows within the garden of our soul." One of his best pieces, in which the impulse is clearest, most partakeable, most continuous towards a definite impression, is the reading of "Tolstoy"; but it is weakened in an unreasonable degree by the repetition of colorless epithets, such as "grim" and "mighty," and such idola as "death's grey, ghostly hound."

Mr. Murry doubtless realizes all this. The sonnet "Serenity," which perhaps may serve here as a taste of his rarest and happiest style, suggests that he has neared the realization:—

"I ask no more for wonders: let me be
At peace within my heart, my fever stilled
By the calm circuit of the year fulfilled,
Autumn to follow summer in the tree
Of my new-ordered being. Silently
My leaves shall on the unfretting earth be spilled,
The pride be slowly scattered that shall gild
A windless triumph of serenity.

"Vex me no more with dreams; the tortured mind
Hath turned and rent the dreamer. Foreordain
My motions, and my seasons solemn lead
Each to his own perfection, whence declined
Their measured sequence promise shall contain,
And my late-opened husk let fall a seed."

It seems a pity that Mr. Murry should not have walked, poetically, in the light of his beautiful sonnet; or at least recorded with his dreams his sense of "sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations."

Better endowed with the quality and use of sensuous observation, Mr. Freeman, a voluminous poet for his period, is not free from much of Mr. Murry's faultiness. His poetry too often is likened unto a vapor which has not been chalcified into shining dew. To have our grumble out, we would condemn his verbosity, which is simultaneous with a vocabulary none too extensive; his frequent lame endings to poems which start with a strong impulse, or the promise of one; his lapses into vague gestures of rural enjoyment; and his unwieldy moralizations. As blank verse in a passage of prose is said to signify the weariness of the writer, so perhaps do frequent harpings on an epithet or phrase which scarcely deserves inclusion at all, in the case of a poet. Mr. Freeman

perhaps touches his worst in this respect in a descriptive-narrative poem called "St. Barthomew," over five hundred lines long. These lines are nothing but concatenation. For a fair example here are five:—

"And in the midst a desolate square was set.
Were now familiar trees, dense forest trees
Of heavy growth, massy and black with jet
And stirless massy shadow, save the breeze
Sighed suddenly. Here too was change and change."

Our marginal notes are: "Massy," twice; in the preceding stanza "masses," in the following stanza "mass." "Stirless," in the following stanza again. "Shadow," used in the two preceding and the following stanzas. "Were now": why this misplacement? one of Mr. Freeman's mannerisms. It obscures the sense and has no metrical excuse. "Dense forest trees" implies "of heavy growth." "Black" or "jet" must go. What is the distinction latent in "change and change"? In short, we had to give up making marginal notes to this poem until the Christmas holidays. Let us add here our doubts of many of Mr. Freeman's metrical licences. Quotation is the shortest method. These occur in eight iambic couplets:—

"As soft, as clear, bat, owl, and swift rabbit whipt. . .
When Morning lifted wide eyes on the wet air. . .
Andrew is gone. Rising early yester dawn. . ."

Such mouthfuls are not licensed, but licentious.

And all this prospect of possible stricture (we do not pursue every line that we might) is puzzling indeed. For, in point of expression, emotion, and subtle music, we have set our asterisk against eleven of Mr. Freeman's seventy-one poems—a very handsome proportion, if time justifies it—as memorable and beautiful. As we gave a sonnet of Mr. Murry's so we may quote one by Mr. Freeman, and, at the same time, declare our personal delight in those harmonious, original lyrics "Rise Now" and "Song of Renewal." The sonnet is not less eloquent:—

"I am that creature and creator who
Loosens and reins the waters of the sea,
Forming the rocky marge anon anew.
I stir the cold breasts of antiquity,
And in the soft stone of the pyramid
Move worm-like; and I flutter all those sands
Whereunder lost and soundless time is hid.
I shape the hills and valleys with these hands
And darken forests on their naked sides,
And call the rivers from the vexing springs,
And lead the blind winds into deserts strange.
And in firm human bones the ill that hides
Is mine, the fear that cries, the hope that sings.
I am that creature and creator, Change."

Mr. Freeman's experiments with internal rhyme are decidedly pleasing; but we outrun our limits.

We now come to Mr. Shanks, and must at once introduce his book as displaying a surer hand and stronger impulse. His poetic shoot is highly trained, nor must that phrase be interpreted in the cold sense; he never deserts the clarity and proportion of classical literature. His aspect is imaginative, though not too greatly aspiring; while he does not often surprise the reader with a breath-taking moment, his work maintains no uncertain glow of felicity. The music of his verse is clear and fresh and fitting. That economy which characterizes his best work can indeed be emphasized into parsimony; hence probably his failures, among which we reckon the dull description of "Nightjars." The last stanza of that poem effectively damns its faint effect when a dark shape

"Slides across our path, a moving clot of night,
His wings knocking loudly as he flies along,
Startling the stillness. And he fades out of our sight,
And in his shadowy thicket resumes the song."

Once too, in the bleak apologue "The End," we are at a loss. The poet dreams that as he stands in a wood a rider and horse pass slowly by. The horse is ancient, and apparently "all in." The rider is also a typical veteran, thin and unkempt. He keeps his eyes fiercely on a cup which is wrapped in rags from others' scrutiny. After this dejected couple follow multitudes of everyday people, not so tumultuously as the rats after the Pied Piper, but willingly. After these come quadrupeds, reptiles, and birds. Then the trees—"the gouty oaks begin to move," and follow the crowd; in short, the poet discovers himself alone on a dreary, desert earth. Last, a vast shape approaches, studying an open book. He reaches the Last Man, already a fleshless spirit; he closes

the book. "Then there was nothing." Obtuse that we are, we flounder in this allegory. Who is the rider and what does his cup symbolize? Wherefore does the animate world follow him, whither wending? We can only hazard a wide solution. Is the answer Eugene Aram's "Remember, this was nothing but a dream"?

However, our hindrances in reading this collection of poems have been very few. Such a sensitive and warm feeling pervades almost every one, and still there recurs such an active imagination, that a quotation might come from almost any page. Since we have given sonnets by Mr. Murry and Mr. Freeman, a sonnet may well end our remarks on Mr. Shanks:—

"The dying man, whom all give up for dead,
Sees how his world a little circle grows,
The fire's warmth falling on the quiet bed,
The sunlight on the wall—sees not, but knows
How at his window the trees bud and leaf,
And clouds march in procession through the sky,
Knows, but sees none of these, and his belief
Falls, and he chides his brain for fantasy.
But should he rise at length, should he awake
From that dark sleep and visit once again,
Feeble and slow as a new-sloughing snake,
What were before but hill and sky and plain,
He finds and hails, at each revealing turn,
Gold plains and skies like gems and hills that burn."

Clear and full, it reminds us of gems in the Greek Anthology.

SOME GREEK SALVAGE.

New Chapters in the History of Greek Literature: Recent Discoveries in Greek Poetry and Prose of the Fourth and following Centuries B.C. Edited by J. U. POWELL and E. A. BARBER. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 10s. 6d. net.)

HISTORIES of Greek literature mostly make their *explicit* with Demosthenes and Aristotle. The subsequent decay of Attic prose, the most subtle and lucid instrument of thought, is an insufficient excuse for this abrupt close, and recent discoveries have given a quietus to the excuse. The aim of the present volume, seemingly, is to lighten the task of some future historian of literature and to provide the professed scholar with a convenient handbook to works, mostly fragmentary, which were unknown to our fathers. We must be allowed to regret that the ten contributors to this volume did not set themselves the task of completing the story of Greek literature. As it is, their work appeals to a small and diminishing class, for, since many of the cited passages are not provided with English versions, the book will be of little use to those who can read the Greek authors only in translations. Nor, indeed, can such readers be expected to linger over a stray bone from a lost organism. Aristotle's treatise on the Athenian Constitution is nearly complete, but is not of universal interest, while the *Mimiambi* of Herondas, realistic scenes from life, are hardly literature of the first rank.

Mr. E. M. Walker's essay on Aristotle's treatise, as might be expected, lacks neither learning nor acumen, and manifestly he is minded to account this treatise the most important of the discoveries. This is an historian's view. Many students of literature are more interested in the remains of Menander, whether for his own sake or for his place in the history of the drama, or for his influence, through Latin adaptations, on our own sentimental comedy. It is true that Richard Cumberland and his contemporary sentimentalists, lacking as they did the genius of Terence, had only a temporary vogue, and that Falkland and Julia in "The Rivals," perhaps designed in the spirit of satire, are no longer tolerable upon the stage; but the fashions of the past must still form a branch of study. It is unfortunate that of the five comedies of Menander, now partly recovered from oblivion, none is so complete as to make us certain of the whole action, but enough remains to uphold a judgment on his plots and his characters. Long ago Goethe saw that one of his chief characteristics was cheerfulness. This view was attacked upon the double ground that the remains were too scanty to justify it, and that cheerfulness was not a characteristic virtue—for a virtue it is—of the Greeks. Your Athenian, it was said, could hold both his sides with laughter, could revel in the wildest extravaganza, and could be very merry in his cups, but for daily and commonplace

cheerfulness he was incapacitated by an inherited strain almost melancholic. This view, of whatever period of Athenian history it be assumed, seems to be, at the best, an exaggeration. The old yeoman in the earliest of Aristophanes' extant plays makes it the gravamen of his charge against the war that merriment has been driven out of his life. Penned as he is within the city walls, he cannot keep the village feast and get drunk at his ease. Merriment, of course, differs from cheerfulness, but it must not be assumed that a man seeks to be merry because he does not know how to be cheerful. This yeoman, at any rate, did not subscribe to Johnson's doctrine that no man is happy save when he is drunk. Like the old Acharnian of the chorus, he could find pleasure enough in the care of his vines, olives, and figs. Menander, writing a century later than Aristophanes, lived in a society where the wealthier class was more changed than the mass of the people. Horseplay and the broad jest were still the staple amusement of the poorer Athenians, and Philemon, by pandering to their tastes, usually carried off the prize from Menander, who appealed rather to the small class of what may be called the Athenian nobility. This class undoubtedly had its defects. The loss of national greatness, while it had not much impaired the material means of the Attic landowner, had distinctly lowered his ideals. Most of the class were eager to add to their incomes—the richer by mining and other speculations, the less rich by serving as *condottieri* in Asiatic wars. Both sets lived on the edge of peril without the true adventurer's delight in that position, and there must have been many in whose lives cheerfulness was not the dominant note. Yet even the evidence which has always been extant should have shown that cheerfulness was no impossibility for an Athenian in the days of the Diadochi. A familiar example is supplied by one of the elder pair of brothers in the comedy which Terence adapted from Diphilus. He had aimed at an unruffled life, had kept black care at a distance, and was disturbed only by a creditable anxiety for the safety and well-being of his adopted son. Goethe had ground enough; and his verdict is amply justified by the recovered pieces of Menander. Menander's is no highly exalted view of life. There are not many occasions for heroism, and passion is merely an evil. If you will be a Romeo you must take the inevitable consequences of your headstrong and irrational behavior. But Menander has the sympathy and tenderness of the true dramatist, never thinks that only the rich and great are worthy of his notice, and always has a warm place in his heart for the loving peasant and the faithful slave.

We note with pain that some of these writers on Greek literature have but scanty regard for the King's English. One tells us of a person "whom Leo rather improbably thinks may be Satyrus himself." Another writes "this alone" in the sense of "only this," and one of the editors is so careless as to say "either in the sense of prospering or detecting the scout." Alas! *quis custodiet?*

TRAVELLERS' TALES.

Travels in the Two Last Centuries of Three Generations. By S. R. ROGET. (Fisher Unwin. 16s.)

WHEN steel springs were first tried on coaches somewhere about 1780, there was a good deal of complaint. Boulton, James Watt's partner, wrote indignantly about "the new improved patent coach, a vehicle loaded with iron trappings and the greatest complication of unmechanical contrivances jumbled together that I have ever witnessed. The coach swings sideways with a giddy sway, without any vertical spring, the point of suspense bearing upon an arch which is called a spring, but it is nothing of the sort." It sounds bad; but we wonder whether Mr. Boulton was not, like most of us, rather conservative, and refused even to try to adapt himself to the new motion. Certainly most improvements, as well as most changes, in coaches or carriages, or from coach to train, from horse-drawn to mechanically propelled vehicles, have been greeted with severe criticism. Sometimes the criticism, helped by circumstance, has resulted in the postponement of changes for the better. Mr. Roget, who has gathered in this volume the travel-diaries and letters of his parents, grandparents, and great-

grandparents, reminds us that between 1829 and 1836 there were a fair number of steam-coaches plying on the English roads; but their successful progress was prevented by the prejudices of the bigoted and the arrival of the railway. Similarly, the practical development of the bicycle was delayed for years by the vehement ridicule which greeted the early velocipede.

Unfortunately, none of the Rogets, not even Peter Mark, author of the "Thesaurus" and Secretary of the Royal Society, were good travellers. No doubt they enjoyed themselves; but they had not the art of making their journeys entertaining in their letters or diaries. Nothing in these pages compares with the excellent "Diary of an Invalid"—a book which should be reprinted—in which Henry Matthews gave so English and intelligent an account of Europe after Napoleon; there is nothing here to rival the shrewd comments on historical characters in that diary of an Irishwoman published last year; and as Mr. Roget leaves out most of his relatives' comments on the sights of Europe, we suppose that there is nothing in the papers which would throw any light on the Rogets' æsthetic tastes. Yet to those who like looking at family albums, who love to wonder precisely what Great-Aunt Jane thought of the Tuileries, or whether Great-Grandfather John treated a Popish procession as a sound Protestant should, this book will have a faded interest; and it will also please the reader who likes to remember that in 1880 he "did" the chief cities of Italy for under a pound a day, or was robbed in 1897 of his tobacco by the scoundrelly customs officers who guard the Italian side of the Simplon. The best of the travellers is certainly Peter Mark. He was held up in Geneva for a short time in the fateful summer of 1803, and encountered some unpleasant and dishonest officials. He expected to be sent to Verdun, but got his passport with a good deal of difficulty. He writes of his feelings towards the Commandant in a way worthy of the "Thesaurus":—

"I have at length escaped from their clutches! The Tygers of Africa are less to be dreaded, are less ferocious than these. Monsters vomited from the deep are less terrible. Demons commissioned from Hell to execute some infernal purpose and overrunning the earth, spreading whosoever they go the calamities of plague, pestilence and famine, are milder and more to be trusted than they. The land is blasted which they tread upon. The air which blows from this accursed country is loaded with infection. All is blighted and corrupted by their envenomed touch. Dissimulation and corruption are in the van, perfidy and treachery pave the way, and ruin and horror are in the rear. Their track is marked by devastation and destruction. Death pursues their footsteps and swallows up what they leave."

What would Peter Mark have written had he been at Ruhlben, if he could summon up such industrious invective after a few weeks' detention in Geneva?

There are a few incidents in these travellers' tales which make the period seem even remoter than it is. It is oddly unexpected, for instance, to hear that in 1783 the voyagers met, near Longwy, "a Pilgrim dressed in dark brown, with cockleshells upon his hat and cloak, a bag for his provisions, a staff in his hand, and a wooden bottle by his side for his drink." To-day the Englishman is unlikely to meet any votaries of St. James of Compostella, except the unconscious little devotees who urge one, in London suburban streets, "to please remember the Grotter." It is a surprise, too, unless one happens to recollect Girtin's drawings, to hear that the Paris of 1802 was without any "foot pavement"; and we are frankly sceptical of the story related to Mr. Roget by a lady, who asserted that in 1822, when crossing the Channel, she was told that the only chance of saving her life was "to throw herself into the sea and swim ashore, a distance of about three-quarters of a mile." Peter Mark went to the United States in 1818, but his account of life there is singularly lacking in entertainment, except that at Cincinnati he encountered what must be one of the earliest instances of the "quick lunch"—when fifty of his fellow travellers "at the first clap of the bell rushed in, scrambled to the first seat, helped themselves to the first dish they laid hold of, pushed it back again, and having dispatched their meal as if they had been eating for a wager, left the room one after another, and in fifteen minutes no one was left at the table but ourselves."

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

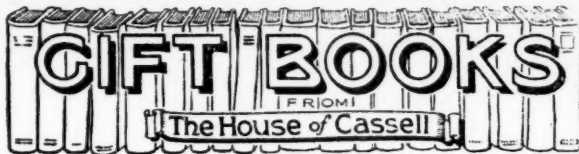
The Mirror in the Dusk. By BRINSLEY MACNAMARA (Maunsel & Roberts. 8s. net.)

IN imaginative literature if the work of the artist is really to count it must be unlike any other artist's work, must strike its own definite and peculiar note, must, in some way, be unique. Yet if we were asked what quality is rarest in contemporary fiction, we should reply just this quality of individuality; therefore when we recognize it—the lyrical note, as one might call it—in the work of a young writer both our hopes and our curiosity are kindled; and we recognize it, to some extent at least, in the book now before us. Unfortunately, by itself, it is not enough. One may have a passionate feeling for music and be unable to play one's instrument, be hampered at every turn by an insufficient technique. The impression that "The Mirror in the Dusk" leaves upon us is that Mr. Macnamara has been hampered; the story is there, but only if we help him out with it; the book, as it stands, is at once much better and much worse than the average novel.

Yet if "The Mirror in the Dusk" is a failure, it is, at any rate, the most promising kind of failure. It comes to grief through no weakness either of imagination or of observation, but simply because Mr. Macnamara has not yet acquired a method. He is both too reticent and too diffuse. In the novel everything that does not help hinders, and there are pages and pages of "The Mirror in the Dusk" which do not help, which are to the real theme no more than the insets in an Arabian tale. The artist, one supposes, is just the man who makes the most of his gift, however slender, and Mr. Macnamara makes the least of his.

At the outset Mr. Macnamara selects four children, whom he introduces to us in his first chapter as trespassers on the land of Colonel Marlay, in search of crab-apples. There are two boys and two girls, Oliver and Seumas, Breedh and Fanny, and the whole tragic history is, we imagine, to be given to us through their lives. These lives are starved, warped, spoiled; and the bright flower of childhood develops into dwarfed and sorry fruit. They have had no chance. The tyranny of the land and of poverty is like a blight upon them. From boyhood Oliver has loved Breedh, and Seumas Fanny; but Seumas becomes a drunkard while Fanny is at work in America; and Oliver, in the end, marries Fanny, though he still loves Breedh; and Breedh, for the sake of the land he possesses, is given to Eugene Gavacan, a maniac. There is the elaborate training of the madman's child to murder his mother and her lover; there is horror, and there is squalor and treachery; and as we read we seem to see how it all could have been moulded into an unforgettable tragedy, gloomy and terrifying, but lit by a wild and beautiful light. Mr. Macnamara has not detached the figure from the clay. He has left it vague and chaotic. The subject is surely a big one; it is rich and suggestive. Yet, though Mr. Macnamara's book is short, he finds room for innumerable divagations, room to follow side-issues which are not perhaps padding, but which somehow suggest padding. He has this room simply because he scamps his main story, takes it up and drops it; so that in the end we see it full of huge gaps and rents. The subject is indicated, not treated. We know nothing, for instance, of Breedh's life with Eugene Gavacan, her insane husband. We know nothing of Eugene himself; hence those vivid and powerful scenes of the murder and the preparation for the murder largely miss fire, because they come to us as detached episodes, unrelated to anything else, without roots, not growing out of the story, but grafted on to it.

Mr. Macnamara has, in fact, no particular plan. Instead of the village Dheel and its life being focused in the four lives he selected at the beginning of the story, the two subjects are treated separately. Parts of the book are presented by direct narrative, and other parts are blurred and befogged, recounted, more or less retrospectively, in the manner of the essayist. Such musings, intermixed with anecdote, have a marvellous effect in chilling our interest in the real story. How can we be interested when the author's own interest has apparently sunk into abeyance? His method becomes that of the cinema writer, who breaks off his drama to show pictures of dreams, of episodes in the past, of episodes unconnected with the actors by any other thread than that they happen to have heard of them, unconnected even by that slender thread. It is



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a way of getting rid of much spare material, of course, but it is not a way to write a work of fiction. Yet all this fault-finding would be quite beside the mark if the book did not present another aspect, if it were not that the material for a masterpiece seems to us to lie buried in it. We wish the author would read Mrs. Margaret Woods's "Village Tragedy," and so see what can be done with a subject not offering anything like the opportunity his subject offers.

FORREST REID.

THE CHRISTMAS BOOKSHELF.

WHILE surveying the shelf of this year's gift-books, we discovered something which seemed too good to be true. No, not a new and astonishing book—nothing so rare as that. We found the simple fact that even bad trade may bring a few odd benefits. One should be grateful, even when not a reviewer, for the meagre output by the publishers this season of ornate editions of works that are ill-suited to gala dress. If there exist readers for ponderous editions—thick pages, colored illustrations, borders, initial letters, and all—of works like "Omar Khayyam," then we should be glad to examine a portrait of one. And even old fables, set out in so elaborate and weighty a manner (for children, too) that only the strong may lift them, and none but the infant Gargantua himself hold one up, as a book should be held, long enough to read a chapter without exhaustion, are volumes obviously for the spoilt darlings of a society which, luckily, appears to be passing away. We love books that are beautifully printed and bound, but there are publishers who seem to imagine such books may be produced by spending money merely on material, and that the joy of the craftsman need not be induced to give it the right form.

We agree that when Hans Andersen's or Grimm's stories are illustrated by an artist of Arthur Rackham's qualities, then the world of faery opens for a child by the lifting of a cover. He does picture the fables. He adds a consonant value to them. But illustrators of imagination are rare, and we are inclined to think that good taste in the selection of paper, type, and binding is still rarer; for we remember that in the prosperous years that are gone the vulgarity of the expensive gift-books in the bookseller's display of Christmas wares was no better than that of a fashionable milliner's.

As an example of a book of the right kind, the Medici Society have sent us a selection of Thomas Hardy's poems (the Golden Treasury anthology). Its price is a guinea. This is a thoroughly pleasing volume; "The Oxen," "Lizbie Browne," and the verses on the loss of the "Titanic" may here be read in a setting which does justice to the master. Another very attractive book is a selection by Dr. John Sampson of the "Poems of William Blake" (Chatto & Windus—Florence Press edition, 15s.). It is strange that Blake is so seldom mentioned in modern literary criticism. Everybody knows "Tyger, tyger, burning bright," and one or two more of his poems; but the white intensity of Blake's faith, and the surprise of his images, which terrify the conventional man as though stared at by uncanny foreign idols, and the ice-clear simplicity of his diction are alien to a generation of unbelievers who have not even enough hope and conviction to grope their way out of the dark. This gift-book would evoke more than a formal gratitude. Shelley's "Poems," in the Oxford edition (Humphrey Milford, 10s. 6d.), is another pleasing volume we have had sent to us. We think we ought to include here, too, a reference to an edition, in three neat volumes for the pocket, of "Gargantua and Pantagruel"—the famous translation. Lovers of Rabelais are in debt to Chatto & Windus for issuing that fount of full-orbed laughter in such a form at the price of 10s. 6d.

Book-collectors are well aware of the prices demanded for picture books of an early issue with illustrations by Kate Greenaway. That delightful artist used to send birthday greetings to John Ruskin and others in the form of her own inimitable art, and twenty-one of these pictures have been reproduced and published for the first time, with an introduction by Mr. H. M. Cundall (Warne & Co., 21s.). This volume is high testimony to the good taste of that

publishing house. For the benefit of the insatiable collectors of John Masefield in every manifestation, Heinemann, at a guinea, has issued "Reynard the Fox," with its huntsmen, horses, and dogs made a little more realistic by G. D. Armour.

There is a row of these gift-books about which it is not easy to say whether they are meant for the old or the young. In most cases it would be safe to guess either way. That tender fragment by Anatole France, "Marguerite" (Lane, 6s.), translated by Mr. J. L. May, with its lovely woodcuts by Siméon, is with such books; and Stevenson's "Virginibus Puerisque," pictured with a full glow of nice sentiment by Norman Wilkinson (Chatto & Windus, 25s.), is a successful attempt at making literature an inducing confection for the young, at least. Others would prefer, as we do ourselves, "Moral Emblems, and Other Poems" (Chatto & Windus, 5s.), illustrated with nineteen woodcuts by R. L. S. There are the Davos poems, done by Stevenson in bed, and printed by young Lloyd Osbourne; and in their original form jewels of great price. We must confess we did not know these humorous verses, and did not expect to enjoy them. But after reading them our opinion of their author goes considerably higher. We are glad to have this reprint, and are particularly grateful for the woodcuts.

We do not suppose the young will see what they want in Leacock's "Nonsense Novels" (Lane, 10s. 6d.), with its really comic pictures by John Kettelwell; but others will. There is no doubt the surprisingly numerous editions of this work of Leacock's are a testimony to the good health and sound mind of their readers. But it may be judged that the young who are no longer children, and yet are unaccustomed to irony and satire, will prefer a large and pictured copy of the "Courtship of Miles Standish," with an introduction by Mr. E. W. Longfellow, who is a descendant of Priscilla and John Alden (Harrap, 10s. 6d.); or Milton's "Comus," in a similar style, Rackham its showman (Heinemann, 25s.). The same again of W. H. Hudson's "Little Boy Lost" (Duckworth, 21s.), with Dorothy Lathrop for its artist. This volume is altogether a good piece of work; and for each of these last three books it is well to point out that, as even Christmas books for children should be English of the tradition, here are opportunities.

But how to class "Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates" (Harpers, 21s.)? One might buy it for oneself, or give it to the boy. A single glance at the pirate on its dust-cover, conning his ship from his quarter-deck, with a sea up-lifted behind him, atop of which burns the vessel he has just plundered, is enough to convince an expert that Howard Pyle, Quaker, artist, and writer, knew the sea by heart, loved ships, and that his wraith had gone back into the past to sail the Spanish Main with buccaneers. Yet others may prefer "Tytyl," Maeterlinck's sequel to the "Bluebird," which in large and decorative form Methuen offers for a guinea; for there are many directions in which the mind may justifiably take its holiday, and there may not be much difference between the sentiment which sees pirates in a rosy light and that which finds pleasure in Maeterlinck's apparitions of life and death.

Though when it comes down to concrete fairyland itself, we found it easily believable in the "Wonderful Adventures of Nils." The original story of a boy who gets changed into an elf, and goes with wild geese to Finland, is a story of adventure famous on the Continent, and its author, Selma Lagerlöf, has a great name. Here it is introduced to us by Velma Howard, and its pictures by Mary Hamilton Frye are as fresh and original as the story (Bird, 12s. 6d.). We enjoyed, too—luckily not being yet too old to know better—the fantasy which Eleanor Farjeon has created out of the "Spring-Green Lady," a singing game of a Sussex village. It is called "Martin Pippin in the Apple-Orchard" (Collins, 7s. 6d.). It is in generous measure, gay, thoughtful, very like the South Country in its luminous and serene atmosphere, and as unexpected as a fairy-tale ought to be. "Weird Islands," all explored, written, and drawn by Jean de Bosschère (Chapman & Hall, 12s. 6d.), make a remarkable and fascinating tour; the voyagers and the natives of the islands do, under the pencil of the artist, certainly communicate that exciting creepiness and chill of the alien and the uncanny. Much simpler, and

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Some of the Christmas gifts, of course, are concerned with the world of realities. A "Dish of Apples," which is a book of verse by Eden Phillpotts and pictures by Arthur Rackham (Hodder & Stoughton, 7s. 6d.), perhaps ought to be included in this section, though it concerns Wassailing, Quarrendens and other choice Devon varieties, and Pomona. The same publishers this year have sent us more of that great field-naturalist, Fabre, in "More Hunting Wasps," and, as a simpler general book for younger readers, the "Wonder Book of Science," both at 8s. 6d.

We wish to stress the importance of Sidney Dark's "Child's Book of France" (Chapman & Hall, 7s. 6d.). As good history should be, it is shot with personality. Mr. Dark is a humane man, and knows that the really great historians are the scholars whose interpretative visions of the panorama in time and space of humanity are like those of Anatole France; it is the sense of unity, giving understanding and compassion, which alone distinguishes real history from the common class-books of history and the problems of astronomy. This little book has the liveliness and ease of good writing, too.

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The picture-books for the little ones have some excellent additions this year. We should guess there is plenty of quick laughter in "Peek-a-Boo Gardeners" (Humphrey Milford, 6s.), drawn by Chloë Preston. "My Book of Favorite Fairy Tales," illustrated by Jennie Harbour

(R. Tuck, 6s. 6d.), has good and simple versions of many of the traditional stories, and would prove a boon to parents who feel too tired to "make it up." For the same reason an elementary version of "Robinson Crusoe," with many colored plates (Ward & Lock, 6s.), might be added to the nursery bookshelf. Nor should "Sunnyside Farm," by Gertrude Wallis (C. W. Daniel, 4s. 6d.), be overlooked. Messrs. Blackie, for the same shelf, have sent us a number of very conspicuous and engrossing colored picture-books, among them "Jolly Old Sports" (6s.) and "Three Jolly Huntsmen" (2s.). Of this kind, Cecil Aldin's "Great Adventure" (Humphrey Milford, 10s. 6d.) is a bright and artistically produced example. Besides, it contains some of Mr. Aldin's dogs.

There is room still to mention "Arthur Mee's Hero Book" (Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d.), with its stories of Socrates, Lincoln, Captain Cook, and other great figures. And last here, only because we receive them as we finish this survey, we acknowledge several Biblical stories: "The Friend of Little Children," by J. Sinclair Stevenson (Oxford, Blackwell, 21s.); and "Forerunners of Christ," "SS. Peter and Paul," and "David," three well-printed little volumes at a low price from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

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APART from the books which an author writes for himself, there are the books which he writes for the public and the books which he writes for a public. The books for the general public rise in their floods all through the year; those for particular publics concentrate chiefly on November. It is then that the categories of boys' books, girls' books, children's books, get their new supplies. The general public buys its books for itself whenever it pleases, but particular publics have their books bought for them at seasonable times, of which the most seasonable is Christmas. Therefore books which are not Christmas books have come to be looked on as books suited to Christmas, and, relying on the categories, uncles and aunts are saved much trouble. Uncle has known for years that Mary might safely be presented with a bangle, or "Little Women"; Aunt feels equally secure in buying John a pocket-knife, or "Treasure Island." Indeed, I half suspect that publishers who pretend to cater for girls and boys are really catering for uncles and aunts. Sometimes, in a blue moon, the caterer provides a dish which, designed for children's diet, becomes food for all ages. Under these blue moons are born John Silver, Jo March, Alice, Jackanapes, Oswald Bastable, and Peter Rabbit. There are many others; and it is in the rare hope of meeting yet one more of their company, whether by virtue of the author's real sense of imagination or of his real sense of character, that we turn to the batches of boys', girls', and children's books, year after year.

At first glance, there seems to be something insensitive in considering books in batches. The eight authoresses under review did not form a cabal before they produced their eight books; the books should express eight distinct entities. But as we read them with an endeavor to discover the entity, we realize that the rare hope is not to be fulfilled, and that the authoresses, with one exception, though not in league together, joined long ago the greater conspiracy of the lords of supply and demand. One by one the books drop into the various pigeon-holes of the category of girls' books.

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Miss Scott-Hopper is the exception I referred to. Of these eight books hers alone displays personal qualities of observation, humor, and imagination which have not yet been exercised into a formula. I hope she will keep them fresh, and guard against her bias towards sentimentality. Her landscape is charming. The actual complications to be solved and straightened in "Angel Unawares" are a little too involved, but Angela fears to tread nowhere, and

everybody falls to her—artists, horse-breakers, plethoric colonels, sad little boys, crusty servants, and two Oldest Inhabitants. She is not quite a real child, and the grown-ups are make-believe grown-ups, but Uncle can bank on Mary's adoring Angela.

Lastly, two books deal with the group of children which is troublesome but lovable. It is a theme which E. Nesbit has dealt with triumphantly; but I cannot imagine her ripping young Bastables (with the exception of Dora) tolerating for one moment the little Desdales in Miss May Wynne's "Mervyn, Jock or Joe." It is the ambition of these apparently jolly, dirt-loving youngsters to be known as "The Sunshine Children" of a pretty, young invalid lady they call "Fairy," and, after she has told them an allegorical fairy-tale, to build "worth-while dreams" of their own. This is the sort of sentiment which only grown-ups think children like. They don't. A singular point in common between this book and May Baldwin's "Three Pickles" is that in both stories an outstanding feature is made of the disobedient naughtiness of a child who is commanded, under a misapprehension, to give up its friends. In each case the child is loyal enough to resent the injustice, and to evade it; and in each case the friends themselves, discovering the disobedience, are the first to go back on the child—which is to be taken as their special sign of grace! "Now listen to me, Meg. You must do what I tell you. Whether you think it is right or wrong has nothing to do with you. It is right for you to obey me; that is what concerns you." This is said by the supposedly delightful, harum-scarum young aunt who is trying to manage the three Pickles. It all seems to me very wrong-headed; as also the remark, in a children's book in 1921, "You don't want to think twice about killing Germans." Oh dear, Miss Baldwin, why think even once about it?

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